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Number 2005-10, December 2005



A Holiday Message from the CPMS Director

As 2005 comes to an end, we in CPMS wish happy holidays and a prosperous New Year to you, our customers in the Defense Human Resources (HR) community. Our contacts with you have consistently demonstrated your ability, hard work, and devotion to the Department of Defense mission. We are proud to have you as our colleagues.

For the past several years, we have talked about transforming the Department's civilian workforce to a culture of performance. To that end, proposed and final regulations were published this year to establish the new HR and labor relations systems of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). While some controversy has ensued, there is no disputing that the final regulations will become the vehicle for transformation.

Looking ahead to 2006 and beyond, the Department faces many challenges in civilian HR management—

- ◆ We must engage in workforce planning to accommodate a higher rate of retirements over the next decade.

- ◆ We must hire the right talent in a competitive labor market and actively recruit a diverse workforce.
- ◆ We must develop future leaders who have a joint perspective on managing the Department's workforce and programs.
- ◆ We must provide transition assistance to employees affected by force-shaping initiatives.
- ◆ And above all, we must vigorously pursue the promise of transformation through NSPS—the promise of a stronger civilian workforce that responds quickly to the demands of the Department's national security mission.

The Department has initiated significant change and accomplished a great deal during 2005. We in CPMS look forward to continuing to work with you as the Defense HR community forges ahead to meet our challenges and accomplish our mission in 2006 and for many a year to come.

Sincerely,

Brad Bunn
Brad Bunn

NSPS Implementation Update

NSPS Program Executive Office

The Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Justice, Office of Personnel Management, and labor organizations that recently filed suit regarding NSPS reached agreement to help expedite resolution of the issues in the lawsuit. DoD agreed to delay implementing portions of NSPS until February 1, 2006, and to hold off making implementing issuances effective until that date, at the earliest. A hearing on the case is scheduled for January 24, 2006.

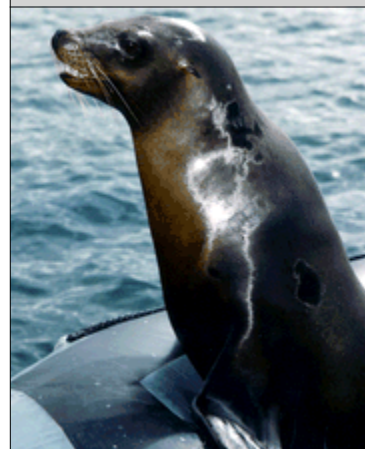
Meanwhile, on December 1 and 2, the Department began the continuing collaboration with the labor organizations by presenting an overview of the implementing issuances. During this process, labor organizations have an opportunity to participate in the further planning, development, and implementation of the human resources system for NSPS. The Department is also moving forward in training the workforce on NSPS.

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"Express" your views; give us feedback! [E-mail us](#)

"Atlanta's new aquarium, which opened in November, is the world's largest," says Roy Irby of the CPMS Office of Complaints Investigation (OCI; article, page 5). Below is a California sea lion, one of the aquarium's 500 species.





Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Contribution Limits Rise in 2006

Benefits and Entitlements [E-mail us](#)

In 2006, employees may contribute up to \$15,000 to their Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account, with taxes on earnings deferred. Those age 50 or older who are contributing the maximum under their regular TSP may make an additional “catch-up” TSP contribution of up to \$5,000. Both limits are \$1,000 higher than in 2005.

If you do not increase your regular TSP contribution, the payroll office will continue to make payroll deductions for you at the level you previously established. However, if you are now making catch-up contributions, you must submit a new form to continue doing so during 2006, or your catch-up contributions will cease.

To adjust your TSP contributions for 2006, access your Component’s employee benefits system (for example, EBIS) and follow the instructions.

While you may adjust your regular TSP contribution at [any time](#), doing so in December allows you to spread your TSP payroll deductions evenly throughout the year. If you are a FERS employee, you should not reach the dollar limit before the end of the year in order to maximize agency matching contributions (see TSP [fact sheet](#), “Annual Limit on Elective

Deferrals,” for details). If you are a CSRS employee, however, you might choose a higher deduction amount in order to complete TSP contributions by the end of the third quarter of 2006. This approach gives you a bit more take-home pay during the 2006 holiday shopping season.

Once you select the number of pay periods during which contributions will be made,

you can use the [calculator](#) on the TSP web site to determine the amount of regular contributions to make each pay period. The site does not include a similar calculator for catch-up contributions, but you can easily estimate that amount by using the same calculator and dividing the results by three, since \$5,000 is one-third of \$15,000.

The effective dates of elec-

tion vary by servicing payroll office. The earliest effective date for employees paid by the Charleston or Denver payroll offices is December 11th, while the earliest date for those paid by the Pensacola payroll office is December 25th (yes, Christmas Day).

COLA for Federal Retirees Takes Effect in December

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The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirees took effect on December 1st. The COLA will first be reflected in annuity payments dated January 2, 2006.

The CSRS full COLA is 4.1 percent, and the FERS full COLA is 3.1 percent.

The amount of a retiree’s first COLA is prorated, based on the number of months from the annuity commencement date to the effective date of the first COLA after the commencement date. Retirees receive one-twelfth of the applicable COLA for each month, not to exceed 12 months, in which they are in receipt of an annuity before December 1st. To receive the full De-

cember 1st COLA, a retiree’s commencing date for retirement can be no later than December 31st of the previous year—in this case, 2004. The chart below shows the prorated percentages that apply to annuitants who have not been retired for 12 months. The pro-

rated percentages vary for CSRS versus FERS employees. For instance, a CSRS employee who retired in May 2005 receives a 2.4 percent COLA, while a FERS employee who retired that month receives 1.8 percent.

Monthly Annuity Commenced in—	Proportion of Full COLA	Prorated Percentage (CSRS)	Prorated Percentage (FERS)
December 2004	12/12	4.1%	3.1%
January 2005	11/12	3.8%	2.8%
February 2005	10/12	3.4%	2.6%
March 2005	9/12	3.1%	2.3%
April 2005	8/12	2.7%	2.1%
May 2005	7/12	2.4%	1.8%
June 2005	6/12	2.1%	1.6%
July 2005	5/12	1.7%	1.3%
August 2005	4/12	1.4%	1.0%
September 2005	3/12	1.0%	0.8%
October 2005	2/12	0.7%	0.5%
November 2005	1/12	0.3%	0.3%



Social Security Benefits Will Rise 4.1 Percent in 2006; Medicare Benefits and Premiums Will Also Increase

Benefits and Entitlements

[E-mail us](#)

Social Security benefits increase automatically each year, based on the rise in the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) from the third quarter of the prior year to the corresponding period of the current year. This year's increase in the CPI-W was 4.1 percent. Accordingly, the monthly Social Security benefits for more than 52 million Americans will increase 4.1 percent in 2006.

Other changes take effect in January of each year based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (i.e., the "taxable maximum") will increase in 2006 to \$94,200 from \$90,000 the previous year. The amount of earnings required for a credit or "quarter of coverage" will increase to \$970 from \$920. The monthly premium for Medicare Part B will increase to \$88.50 from \$78.20.

These and various other changes in Social Security and Medicare benefits can be found on the accompanying charts.

Social Security Changes for 2006

Item	2005	2006
Social Security Max. Taxable Earnings	\$90,000	\$94,200
Earnings Required for a Credit	\$920	\$970
Requirement Earnings Test		
• Under age 65	\$12,000	\$12,480
• Age 65 + ___ months	\$31,800 6 months	\$33,240 8 months
COLA for Social Security Recipients	2.7%	4.1%
Min. Social Security Earnings Needed for Substantial Earnings	\$16,725	\$17,475
Primary Insurance Amount (PIA) Formula:		
• 90% of first \$ ___ of average indexed monthly earnings +	\$627	\$656
• 32% of average indexed monthly earnings over \$ ___ and through \$ ___ +	\$627 \$3,779	\$656 \$3,995
• 15% of average indexed monthly earnings over \$ ___	\$3,779	\$3,995
Max. Monthly Social Security Benefit, Worker Retiring at Age 65 in January	\$1,939	\$2,053

Medicare Changes for 2006

Item	2005	2006
Part A—Hospital Insurance		
Deductible (Per benefit period ¹)	\$912	\$952
Coinsurance (Per day)		
• 61 st to 90 th day	\$228	\$238
• 91 st to 150 th day	\$456	\$476
Part B—Medical Insurance		
Premium (Per month per person)	\$78.20	\$88.50

¹ Benefit period—The way that Medicare measures your use of hospital services. A benefit period begins the day you go into a hospital and ends when you have not received hospital care for 60 consecutive days.

If you go into a hospital after one benefit period has ended, a new benefit period begins. You must pay the inpatient hospital deductible for each benefit period. There is no limit to the number of benefit periods you can have.



Second Phase of CMIS-R Is Deployed; Includes Manager's Dashboards

Regionalization & Systems Modernization (REGMOD) [E-mail us](#)

Are you a senior DoD functional manager looking for a tool to help easily identify workforce trends or progress toward organizational goals? Are you a functional HR specialist trying to track down and distribute personnel data for a project? Well, we can help! The Regionalization and Systems Modernization Division (REGMOD) deployed the

second phase of its new civilian personnel data warehouse on August 30th. Phase II of the Corporate Management Information System—Revised, or CMIS-R, includes manager's dashboards, report scheduling and distribution features, and additional data marts designed for specific functional communities such as Acquisition and Security. Specifically—

- ◆ Manager's dashboards provide high-level leaders with a graphical

display of important metric data. These key performance indicators give managers insight into trends and let them see at a glance if their organization is on track to accomplish its goals.

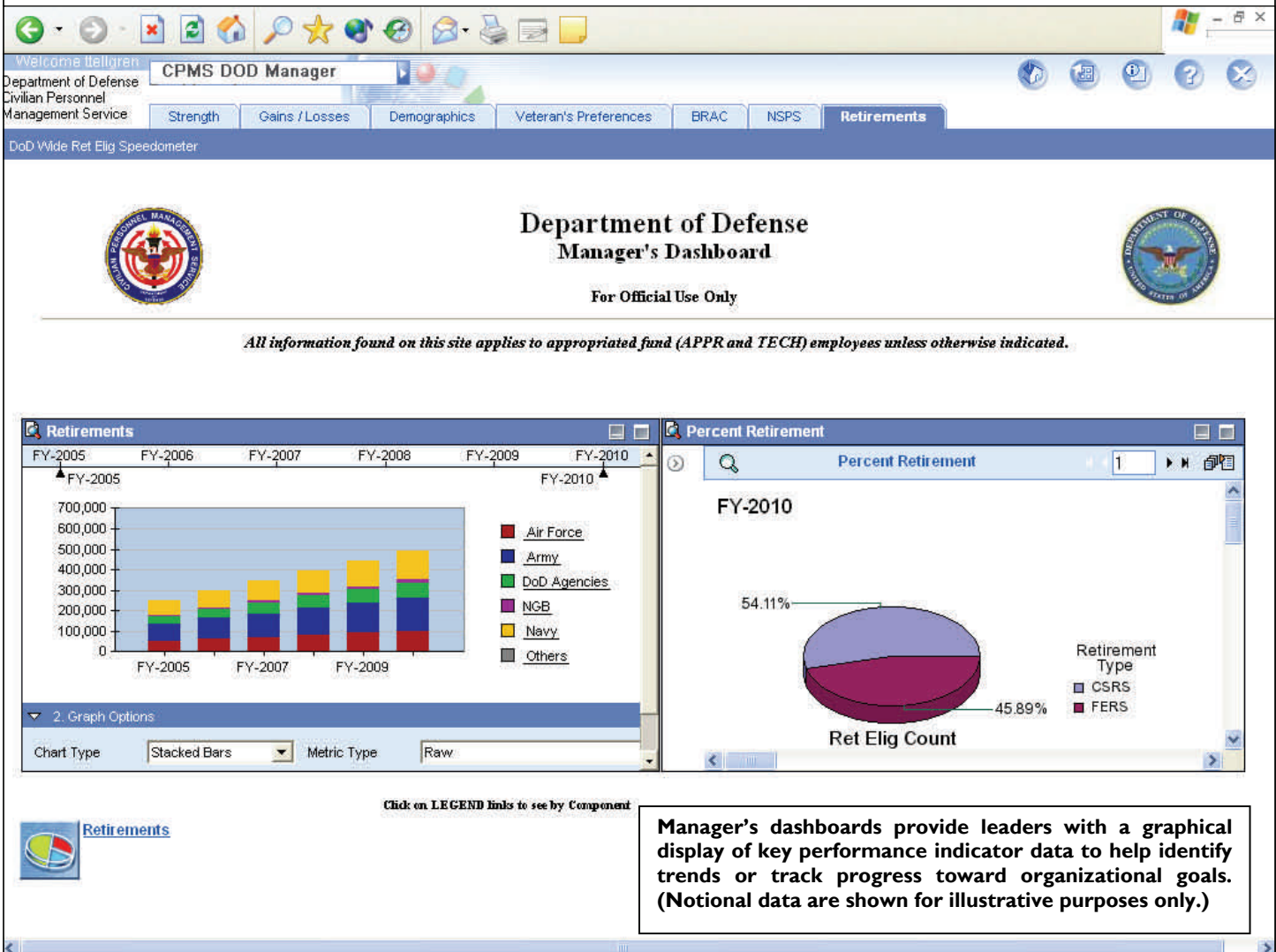
- ◆ The new report scheduling and distribution features allow CMIS-R to schedule monthly or quarterly HR reports. Once the schedule is established, CMIS-R automatically sends the reports to a distribution

list on a specified day.

- ◆ The new data marts will allow specific functional communities to efficiently organize and access their data.

REGMOD is in the process of expanding user access to CMIS-R and determining training needs.

The REGMOD point of contact for CMIS-R is Tim Tellgren, TimothyN.Tellgren@Randolph.af.mil, phone (210) 652-6500.





CPMS Personnel-ity Profile

OCI's Roy Irby Reflects on His Military and DoD Civilian Careers

Noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are said to be the backbone of the armed forces. If so, then the First Sergeant (or "top" in Army slang) is the heart and soul, an integral part of the command team linking the

enlisted ranks and their commander. Gen. George C. Marshall, when asked in 1933 whom he could spare for the Civilian Conservation Corps, agreed to release all but four officers, saying, "I will run this command

with First Sergeants." Former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John W. Vessey said being a First Sergeant was the toughest job he ever had.

It is with satisfaction, then, that Roy Irby of the Office of Complaints Investigation (OCI) reflects on his Army career. He enlisted shortly after graduating from George Washington Carver High School in Atlanta, GA,

his hometown. After "20 years, five months, and six days," he says, he retired as a First Sergeant with the rank of E-8.

Along the way, he was stationed at Fort Jackson, SC, served in Germany, and spent two tours in Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War. In 1991 he completed the 16-week equal employ-

(Continued on page 6)

CARE Division Deploys New PPP Distance Learning Course

Civilian Assistance & Re-Employment (CARE) [E-mail us](#)

The Priority Placement Program (PPP) Basic Course, a new on-line training course, is available through the Civilian Assistance and Re-Employment (CARE) Distance Learning Center, which is located on the CARE homepage at www.cpms.osd.mil/care. No user ID or password is required.

The purpose of this course is to prepare Human Resources Offices to administer the Priority Placement Program in accordance with DoD policies and procedures. It is intended for human resources specialists and assistants who are responsible for administering the PPP at their respective DoD activities.

There are no prerequisites for taking this course. However, the training is targeted to individuals with a basic working knowledge of DoD human resources staffing policies and procedures. This course is a prerequisite for either an on-

site PPP course or the PPP course presented at the training facility in Southbridge, MA.

The on-line training consists of four chapters:

- ◆ Program History and Organization;
- ◆ Releasing Activity Policies and Procedures;
- ◆ Gaining Activity Policies and Procedures; and
- ◆ Special Policies.

Each chapter consists of one or more lessons, with a quiz at the end of each lesson.

The course is self-paced and can be taken all at once or in sections. The estimated time required to complete all four chapters is approximately 8.5 hours, but the actual time will vary depending on the individual's learning skills and work experience. Upon completing the last chapter, users will be able to print a certificate of completion.

We hope you will learn and benefit from this and future courses in the CARE Distance Learning Center.

Death Benefits for Survivors Increase in December

Benefits & Entitlements [E-mail us](#)

Children's benefits payable for deaths occurring on or after December 1st are \$420 (single orphan) and \$504 (double orphan). If a benefit is payable to more than three children, the rates payable to be divided by the number of eligible children are \$1,260 (single orphan) and \$1,512 (double orphan).

Under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), a basic employee death benefit is payable to the surviving spouse (or former spouse) of a de-

ceased employee with at least 18 months of creditable service. The law provides that this lump-sum benefit is an amount equal to half the employee's final annual pay (or average pay, if higher) plus \$15,000 adjusted for cost of living allowances (COLAs) under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) rules. The CSRS COLA, which becomes effective on December 1st, will increase the basic employee death benefit for deaths occurring on or after that date to half of the employee's final annual pay (or average pay, if higher) plus \$26,584.62.

CPMS Employment Corner

CPMS vacancies are posted at <http://www.hr.dla.mil/onjams/splash.htm>. From that web page, click on the "Job Opportunity Announcement

Search Page" link, scroll down to "Organization Options," select "Hq/CPMS," and scroll down to announcement numbers that start with "CPMS."



Roy Irby Has Traveled the Globe, but He Always Had “Georgia on My Mind”

(Continued from page 5)

ment opportunity (EEO) advisor’s course at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, becoming the EEO advisor to the commanding general of Fort Belvoir, VA. Later assigned to the Total Army Personnel Command in Alexandria, VA, Roy was the professional development NCO for soldiers in the grade of Staff Sergeant (E-6) through E-8 in the 75H personnel management career field. At the same time, he was a First Sergeant supporting 1,500 soldiers throughout the country.

His last assignment brought him back to Atlanta, where he retired from the military in 1999. He then became a Federal-sector EEO complaints investigator with the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Washington, DC, field office, which processed cases nationwide. Although he initially moved to the National Capital area, within six months his managers agreed to let him work from Atlanta, since his productivity exceeded that of many long-time investigators.

In May 2001 Roy joined the OCI Atlanta area office as an investigator. He is dual-certified as a mediator by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and the Justice Center of Atlanta. “I like the opportunity to investigate complaints and have a chance to resolve them,” Roy says. “I have exceeded OCI case-

completion standards for three years running, and I am on track to do so again in 2005. As an OCI investigator, I can work independently, set my own priorities, and be productive.

“CPMS espouses teamwork, and OCI has embraced the team concept. Mediators and investigators work to-

high school senior who plays varsity football, and daughter Xaviere, an Alabama State University senior majoring in criminology.

“We love Atlanta, the capital of the South,” Roy says. “We are Falcons season ticket-holders. Atlanta is growing and has many entertainment venues, plus

Roy Irby rates as a top who traveled the globe and returned to his roots in Atlanta, where he cherishes his ties to family and the community at large. He remains ever mindful of the values expressed in the poem, “Dedication to a First Sergeant”:

I Am A First Sergeant.

My job is people—Every one is my business.

I dedicate my time and energy to their needs: their health, morale, discipline, and welfare.

I grow in strength by strengthening my people.

My job is done by faith; my people build faith.

My job is people—

Every One Is My Business.

Career Brief

EDUCATION. BA in Human Resources Management, National-Louis University, 1993. Master of Sciences in Human Resources Management with a concentration in development, National-Louis University, 1996.

EXPERIENCE. 1979 through 1990s: Rose through Army enlisted ranks as a personnel management specialist, retiring as a First Sergeant, E-8, with 20 years of service. 1999: GS-11 EEO specialist with the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Washington, DC, investigations field office. 2001: GS-12, target 13, personnel management specialist (investigator) with OCI. 2002: GS-13 with OCI.



Roy Irby enjoys fishing and just relaxing on his 18-foot tournament V-18 bass tracker. (Family photo)

gether. All OCI area offices combine their efforts to work as one and accomplish the OCI mission. CPMS is truly an organization that puts its people first, with programs like telework. Even though I prefer working in the office overall, I also like the convenience of regularly working from home.”

Roy and his wife, Georgette, make their home in the Atlanta suburbs. They are proud of Roy Junior, a

historical sites like the Martin Luther King Museum, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and King birth home. Outdoor activities are also plentiful.”

Roy loves fishing and just relaxing on his 18-foot tournament V-18 bass tracker with his uncles, cousins, and friends. He also likes horseback riding. “There are several horse farms here in Clayton County. I like Tennessee walkers and quarter horses.”